

REMARKS

1. As required by the Examiner, Applicant submits an Abstract of the Disclosure on a separate sheet attached hereto.
2. Applicant requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the disclosure in view of the above corrective amendment to page 1, line 11. Applicant also corrects the spelling of "reasonable" on page 1, line 15.
3. Applicant requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to claims 2-5, 8 and 9 in view of the above claim amendments.
4. Applicant also respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, in view of the above claims which have been amended to address each and every one of the Examiner's stated grounds in support of this rejection.

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On page 5, paragraph 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that dependent claims 2-4 and 6 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

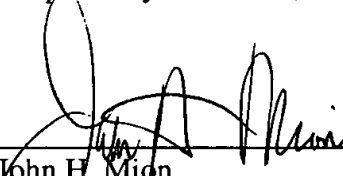
By the above amendments, Applicant has canceled claim 2, and inserted its limitations in the independent parent claim 1, whereby all of claims 3-11 are now dependent on the amended parent claim 1 (2/1).

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. APPLN. NO. 09/868,859

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance with all of claims 1 and 3-11; however, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to **call the undersigned attorney** to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Applicant files concurrently herewith a Petition (with fee) for an Extension of Time of Two Months. Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. The Commissioner is also authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 and/or § 1.17 necessary to keep this application pending in the Patent and Trademark Office or credit any overpayment to said Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A process for manufacturing (U,Pu)O₂ mixed oxide nuclear fuel pellets. In a first blending operation, PuO₂ is mixed with a UO₂ powder and/or fuel manufacturing scrap, forming a first blend. The first blend is micronized and sieved to form a conditioned first blend. Non-free-flowing UO₂ is selected as a second portion of UO₂. The second portion of UO₂ is mechanically granulated to form granulated free-flowing UO₂. In a second blending operation, the conditioned first blend is further mixed with the granulated free-flowing UO₂ and possibly scrap. Lubricants and/or poreformers are added. The blend is pelletized and sintered. During granulation, the non free-flowing UO₂ is compressed to form tablets. The tablets are then crushed until a free-flowing crushed material has been formed. At least one portion of this free-flowing crushed material is used in the second blending operation.